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either of the nearest relatives or of the clan to which the lodge belonged. They believed that the lodge had a spirit which would have sent bad luck to one taking possession illegally.

The females of the lodge owned in common the domestic goods consisting of bedding, pots, household and gardening tools, the dogs, gardens, the wooden mortar and pestle, and the mares and colts. Clothing and personal effects were held individually. The men owned their weapons used in warfare and hunting as well as their own clothing and pipes. Men also owned the stallions and geldings. Sacred tribal bundles were held collectively by the man and his wives.

Lodges were built with little ceremony; the only rites were performed at the cutting of the notches for the four center posts when an old woman having the right to cut the posts was called in to sing one song and pray for the family's success. She received one robe for her services. It was the duty of the clan to assist in the erection of a member's lodge. Since these lodges were large, a considerable amount of work was entailed in erecting one and covering it with poles, willows, grass, and earth.[3] As a rule, the clan prepared a feast and invited the opposite moiety to assist, in which case the clans assisted according to the seating arrangement of the men in the Okipa or in council.

Mandan informants state that in earlier times each household had one or more game pits. These pits were dug by all the members of the household and were owned collectively. While the men would bring the poles for the cover and kill the game caught in them, the women frequently did most of the work of excavating and removing earth from the area of the pit. In recent times many households had fishtraps which are believed to have been used since introduced by Black Wolf. Fish bones, particularly catfish bones, are very abundant in the Heart River villages. The ceremonies associated with the trapping of fish, particularly the catfish, were performed by the older men, but the women assisted in weaving the walls for the trap and in sorting and cleaning the fish.

There was considerable variability in the status of household

3. For a report of the amount of materials used in the completion of an earth lodge see George F. Will, "The Mandan Lodge at Bismarck," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 1 (October, 1930).

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Chapter VIII

CATFISH-TRAPPING CEREMONY

THIS ceremony was associated with the eagle-trapping bundle, and both possessed a common mythological origin from Black Wolf. There was no direct reference to the fish trap in the Black Wolf myth, but in theory the sacred snare could catch anything. Crows Heart explained that even a buffalo corral was in reality a large snare, so a man owning a sacred snare was selected to stand on a high hill and by means of motions, as of snaring the buffaloes, pulled the animals by its magical powers into the corral.[1] War leaders took their sacred snares along when looking for enemies for supernatural aid in ensnaring and destroying their foes.

Purchase of catfish- and eagle-trapping rites could be made simultaneously, or the fish-trapping rights could be bought at a later date. Some men bought rights in only one of the ceremonies. A seller possessing rights in both ceremonies could sell each ceremony four times. Associated closely with these two ceremonies were the sweat lodge and the snare rites for doctoring and officiating at the buffalo and antelope pounds.

Although the Missouri River carries considerable sediment, catfish are very abundant. The presence of catfish bones in ancient Mandan and Hidatsa villages indicates that considerable use was made of these fish as food.

When a fish trap was in use, the black-bear hide was kept in the owner's lodge, laid out on calicoes on a four-post standard with its head pointing toward the fireplace. Food was offered to the bundle each day while the fish trap was being used.

Ben Benson remembered these Mandan who had catfish-trapping rights about 1880:

1. Black Tongue (Big Turtle). He was also custodian of the Okipa turtle drums, Hoita in the Okipa, owner of an Eagle-trapping bundle, and a singer in the Corn ceremonies.

1. Refer to my manuscript, "Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization," for an account of the ceremonies associated with the buffalo corral.

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2. Hits on Back. Owner of an Eagle-trapping bundle, a Holy Woman Robe bundle, and a Bird bundle of Sikaraxa.

3. Iron Eyes. Owner of an Eagle-trapping bundle, a Wolf ceremony bundle, and custodian of an Okipa turtle drum.

4. Old (Black) Bear. Owner of an Eagle-trapping bundle.

5. Little Shield. Owner of an Eagle-trapping bundle, and a Big Bird (Thunderbird) bundle.

6. Big Walker. Owner of an Eagle-trapping bundle.

It will be noted that each of these men also had eagle-trapping rights. In addition to these six bundle-owners, there were a number of men possessing fish-trap rights without securing a bundle. Such rights were acquired by payment of goods to a bundle-owner, who authorized the construction of a trap with instruction that the purchaser address his prayers to the seller's bundle. The following account by Crows Heart illustrates purchase by this method. His maternal grandfather had owned fish-trapping rites which had not been passed on. To receive instruction, his mother's sister directed him to the nearest relative of the opposite moiety.

CROWS HEART'S NARRATIVE OF FISH-TRAPPING

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When I was a young man, I often fished with a line and metal hooks bought at the trading post. I never had very good luck catching fish that way. I only caught small catfish, bullheads, and white shiners which were full of bones. I often went down to the river in the fall when the water was low and helped the old men bail the fish out. They were catching the fish at night. Their fish were large ones, mostly catfish. Many of the very old people, especially the old women whose husbands were dead, came to the traps, and the men would give them fish. This made the old women very happy, and they would sing songs of praise to the old men. When I saw how happy it made them, I decided to trap fish when I grew up and make the old people happy.

One day I asked my "mother" how I could get the right to make a fish trap, and she said, "Go to Old Black Bear;[2] he is the man you must see."

When she said that, I asked, "Must I pay him?"

She replied, "You will have to pay him a horse and some blankets."

When I was nearly thirty years old, I invited Old Black Bear to my earth lodge. My wife prepared a feast of meat, bread, and coffee. I spread out a new robe on the floor, and he sat down on it. I had an overcoat I had paid $30.00 for; I put that over his shoulders. I also gave him a good gun, a fair horse, a redstone pipe, a good butcher knife, and three or four pieces of calico. Then he said, "What's up? What's all this for?"

I replied, "I want you to do me a favor. I want you to give me the right to make a fish trap."

He said, "I will give you the right to make and set out a fish trap. There's not much time today. I will teach you how to make the trap. If you think it

2. Crows Heart's father's moiety.

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is too far to come to my place, go to Benson, who lives near you; he will teach you all the songs, for he knows them. He paid me to sing them for him. You do not need to sing the songs each time you set the trap; you can pray to me instead, for I have the right to them."

Old Black Bear taught me how to make the trap. The willows used should be about six feet long. Each pole should be sharpened on the end; the diameter of the pole would be that of a man's little finger. The willows were tied together in four bunches of one hundred poles each, like mats. Traps could be

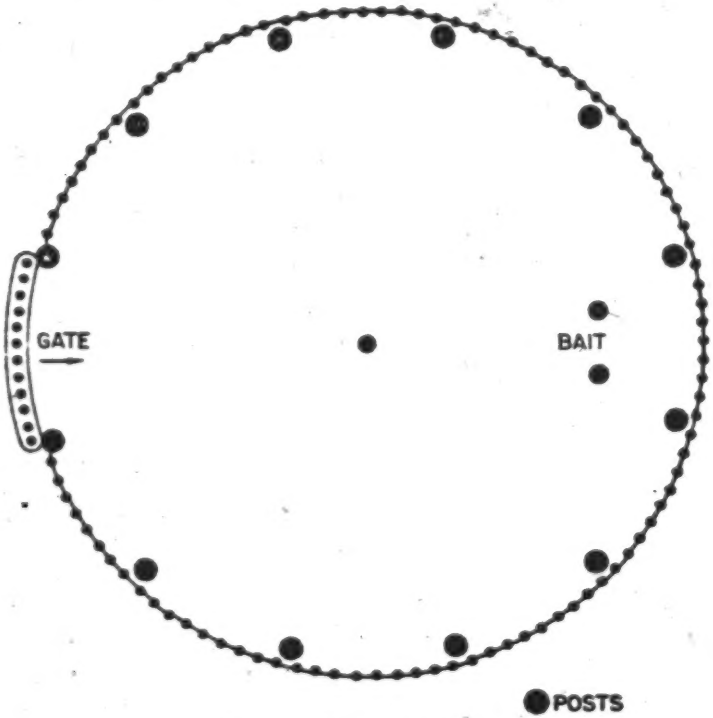

FIG. 37.—Plan of catfish trap

set out in the water or built against a bank. When the trap was set out in the water, twelve posts were set into the ground. Two on the downstream side were set the length of a man's foot apart, for the door was fastened there. The willows were fastened to the large posts and driven into the ground, making a circular inclosure [see Fig. 37]. Sometimes suitable banks were found to attach the trap onto. When a sharp bank could be found, the side toward the bank was usually left open [see Figs. 38 and 39].

Care must be taken in selecting a place to put the trap into the water. The

3. This was the usual practice when one did not wish to learn all the ritual and become a singer in the ceremony. In cases of purchase, the new owner prayed to the animals, etc., represented in the bundle, as well as to the person from whom the bundle was acquired.

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FIG. 38.—Black Bear inside the catfish trap with one of the fish baskets. (Courtesy of the North Dakota Historical Society.)

FIG. 39.—Black Bear closing the diamond willow gate. (Courtesy of the North Dakota Historical Society.)

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best place to locate a trap is downstream from a point of projecting land or driftwood where the water is not too swift. The fish stop in the deep quiet water. The water must come up to one's armpits, for the traps must be set in deep water to catch the large fish.

We tie willow stems with the leaves on all the way round the trap at the level of the water so that any loose bait will not float away. The door was made of willows tied together, and the entrance was downstream. When the river bottom was sloping or there were branches imbedded in the sand, we smoothed the bottom and carried out all the wood before setting the trap down.

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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met the returning hunters at a short distance from the village, and the hunters dropped portions of the meat for them.

When the Missouri broke up in the spring large numbers of buffalo were drowned and floated down the river. The Mandans usually caught large quantities of these as they floated by, and esteemed them as better than the fresh meat. Henry says that meat was nearly always hung up till partially decayed, after which it was better liked. The intestines of the buffalo were considered a good food and were always eaten. The Mandans made pemmican, as did all of the plains tribes, grinding up the dried meat and packing it in parfleches, after which buffalo fat was poured in.

Probably the antelope were next in importance to the buffalo. These were caught in large bands by means of what were called parks. At the head of a coulée an enclosure of branches was made with a narrow opening from which two fences of branches led away in the shape of a funnel, extending for a mile or often more. The Indians, on horseback, by surrounding a band of antelopes could gradually work them towards this enclosure, through the gate of which they were at last forced to go. The entrance was then guarded and the hunters knocked the animals on the head with the stone war clubs; a hundred or more at a time were often killed in this fashion.

Wolves and foxes were trapped in pitfalls which were dug to a depth of eight or ten feet, covered with branches and baited with pieces of buffalo meat. Beaver and other small fur-bearing animals were caught in traps. Bears were killed only occasionally as the Indians did not like to attack them. Cat-fish and sturgeon, as well as smaller fish and turtles were caught along the river, where unios and snails were also gathered.

The larger birds were caught in a rather peculiar fashion. The hunters usually went to the Bad Lands to hunt them. There a pit was dug in some likely place. Bait of small pieces of meat was scattered about, after which the hunter concealed himself in the pit, dragging over the top a covering of branches with bait upon them. Then he waited patiently, often for a day or more till a bird should alight on the branches; as soon as this happened the bird was grasped and pulled down into